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VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

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October 2012

President's Message-The Feedline

By Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX

Hmmm, is it still summer because correct me if I'm wrong, it is early fall, isn't it or did I somehow miss the changing of the seasons? All I know is that for the past few days, it's been damn hot around the area! Yours truly recently upgraded his shack in replacing the old service panel with a brand new 200 amp. panel that also provides a sub-feed of a 125 amp. circuit into a subpanel in the garage. Now if I can just get P.G. & E. to come out and put in a new service feed from the telephone pole connection point!!!! With this upgrade, both yours truly and his XYL have big plans on the horizon to include getting some radio amplifiers amongst other equally important items like a large hot tub and some totally energy efficient A/C units!

Jerry (KD6WKY) and I are participating in this coming weekend with the NCCC radio contest. While I do not know everything, I was planning on working both the 6 and 2 meter SSB's, but in my haste and not knowing it all, I am only going to be able to work the 6 meter SSB mode and I'm not sure how that will play out given the band and what if feels like at any given moment since it's either here or nowhere. But I'm still going to work some HF bands as well. Jerry has sent out several invitations to the club members encouraging anyone to come out and see for yourself just what this event is all about. We're looking to expand this weekend event next year by checking out some hilltops in the range of 2500 feet or better instead of setting things up out in a prune orchard in Winters. Isn't higher better? This past Saturday (September 29th), both myself and Jerry attended the Benicia Radio Club's license testing event to learn more of what we both need to know including some valuable tips from the Benicia club VE team members, We had both hoped that those VVRC club members who recently were certified as a VE would have attended this event along with us both so that the knowledge imparted by the Benicia VE team. Both Jerry and myself went over to our club VP's house (Chris, KD7TQO) to see his shack and QTH setup and we both were quite impressed with what he had insofar as to his radios, antennas, solar cells and other related shack equipment & gadgets. We all agreed to take a good look at repairing Chris's missing element on his beam later in October to see if it is indeed repairable.

Remember that next weekend (Oct. 13, 14) is Pacificon down in Santa Clara at the Marriott Hotel. I'm once again attending the antenna forum as well as the event on Saturday and going back for Sunday will depend largely on whether I could not see or attend a given seminar as it's a long drive down and back if you've never driven the distance to this event! As much as I had hoped of having a worthwhile subject for this month's club meeting, I'm sorry to report that it will likely be next month before I can bring to our club a subject from either myself or someone else. Stay tuned on band and don't change the frequency, OK? With the weekly Net meeting, a technical question will be asked just like it has been as I'm just trying to liven up the weekly net meeting. And I may throw in another gig to either supplement the weekly net meeting or separate it from the technical question. Okay, that's about all I have for the moment. I would like to let everyone know that this club is on the road to expansion by holding its first scheduled VE license exam testing on December 1st, 2012. This is the first on many future license testing exams that this club will partake in. Since I have as does our club treasurer all of everyone's email addresses which we believe to be current, there should be no reason for this next forthcoming Executive Order and/or any future emails to go unnoticed unless I get a "bounce back" for an email sent as undeliverable. If that happens, then for those club members who did not receive the email notice, that will be the club member's responsibility to inform both myself and the club treasurer of the email address change. All future email communications from your club president will have the "Vaca Valley Radio Club" in the subject line to identify the origin of the sent email. If the sent email winds up in the spam or junk folders, then no one can place blame on the sender, right?

Well, that's about all for the moment. Until next month, be safe, be well and G.O.T.A.! 73!

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Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 PM local time by club Vice President Chris Jones as the club president had not yet arrived.

The Financial Report was prepared and given by club treasurer Bob Hewitt as follows:

General Fund = $1,657.57
Repeater Fund = $766.00
Prize Fund = $94.00
Fund Balance = $2,511.57

Both the Treasurer's Report and August Meeting minutes were approve.

Old Business: Discussion about when to schedule the field trip to Mt. Vaca was brought up. Bob Hewitt K6HEW will contact Skipp May WV6F to set it up. A special net call will take place the night before the field trip to see who is going.

New Business: None

Raffle: $26 was won by Jerry Olive KD6WKY

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Mt. Vaca Field Trip

REPEATER SITE VISIT

Skipp May, WV6F, has graciously said he would give us a tour of his repeater site on Saturday, October 27. This is the site of several repeaters including the W6VVR repeater used by the Vaca Valley Radio Club on their Tuesday night net.

Please be aware the Skipp's work schedule is subject to change and may require a cancellation of the trip. Also, bad weather at the site may cause cancellation. For these reasons, the following procedure will be followed:

Skipp will be contacted the Friday afternoon preceding the event.

A radio net will be held on the 145.470 MHz repeater at 7:00 PM on the Friday preceding the event. This net will be for the purpose of informing those interested in going to the repeater site if the trip will be held or if it will be canceled.

It the trip is being held, those interested in going will meet at the Vine Street Fire Station at 0915 on Saturday. Car pool arrangements will be made at this time.

At promptly 0930 the members will leave the Fire Station and go to the repeater site. Skipp will meet the members at the site.

Merriment on Main

Tuesday, November 27 is Merriment on Main this year. The W6VVR Vaca Valley Radio Club will again assist in this community event with amateur radio communications.

For the second year now the requirement of a back ground investigation is mandatory. Since this is a family event where event participants interact with children, it is necessary to check the credentials of all involved from Santa Claus down to those pick up the trash when it is over and everyone in between.

A back ground check can be obtained by contacting the Vacaville PD, ask for Natalie.

The Headquarters QTH will again be Tax Advantage on Merchant Street.

Please be sure to come to the October meeting for details. We need as many volunteers with good two meter HT radios as possible.

Around the Shack

By Jerry Olive, KD6WKY

The HF bands have been very active over the past 30 days or so with to big DXpedition in our own HF back yard over in the South Pacific.

NH8S Swains Island was active in early to mid-September with excellent propagation to North America. I know several club members worked this DXpedition with easy. Tom N6AJR, Skip AF6HC, Marcus KI6WDX and I all have them in the log and are waiting for our QSL cards. It will be years before anyone goes back to NH8S to put that entity on the air so this is a rare one.

The other biggie was 3D2C over on Conway Reef which is a 36 hour boat ride from Fiji. That group just ended their DXpedition after working over 71,000 QSO's. Several club members worked this group also.

A few much smaller DXpedition campaigns were on the air recently. A trio of radio amateurs from ZA Albania were heard and worked using the ZA prefix with their home calls. I worked 5U6E in Niger on 30 meters the other night.

Although I have not worked them, I have seen many DX Cluster spots for TT8TT in Chad. I'll be listening for that one, you can count on it. 73!

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2011 ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Vice President: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Richard Craig, KJ6MIB
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Tom Christman KE6MDM

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

PACIFICON 2012 will return to the Santa Clara Marriott Hotel. The Pacific Division convention has the honor of serving as the **ARRL National Convention**.

Astronaut Lee M. Morin, KF5DDB will speak at our banquet and present a forum in the Sedona Ballroom Saturday, where we will also watch some of our young hams make contact with the Space Station. **ARISS** (Amateur Radio on the International Space Station).

The Friday **Antenna Seminar has been re-opened for an additional 95 seats**. (The room has been enlarged to maximum size.) No registration at the door. When this online pre-registration is closed, the seminar will be sold out. You must purchase or have purchased a convention badge. Sorry, no more syllabi thumb drives available for sale.

No doubt with national convention status, there will be an explosion of exhibitors and vendors for our conventioneers. Pacificon will feature **ARRL EXPO** which is a showcase of ARRL exhibits, activities and program representatives—celebrating the very best of Amateur Radio.

Exhibit Hall hours: Friday 3-6 pm -- Saturday 9-5 pm -- Sunday 9-1 pm

FCC Seeks to Change Amateur Radio Licensing Rules, Allow Additional Emission Types

On October 2, the FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in WT Docket No. 12-121 that seeks to change the Amateur Radio licensing rules, especially as they concern former licensees. Acting upon an April 2011 Petition for Rulemaking filed by the Anchorage VEC to give permanent credit to radio amateurs for examination elements they have successfully passed, the FCC proposes to revise Section 97.505 to require that Volunteer Examiners (VEs) give examination credit to an applicant who can demonstrate that he or she formerly held a particular class of license. In addition, the Commission seeks to shorten the grace period during which an expired amateur license may be renewed and to reduce the number of VEs needed to administer an amateur license examination. In response to a Petition for Rulemaking filed by the ARRL in March 2011, the FCC looks to amend the Amateur Service rules to allow amateur stations to transmit additional emission types in order to permit Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA) in the Amateur Service. But in doing so, it denied the League's request for a blanket waiver pending the resolution of the rulemaking proceeding.

Comments on these proposed rules changes will be accepted until 60 days after the *NPRM* is published in the ***Federal Register*** (this can take up to six weeks after release of the *NPRM*). Reply comments will be accepted until 90 days after publication in the *Federal Register*.

Licensing Issues

Examination Credit

To be issued a new or upgraded amateur operator license, a person must pass an examination or otherwise receive credit for the examination element(s) required to qualify for the relevant license class.

Applications for new or upgraded licenses must be filed through a volunteer-examiner coordinator (VEC), which obtains the applicant information from VEs, who in turn administer examination sessions and issue a certificate of successful completion of an examination (CSCE) to an examinee who scores a passing grade on an examination element. A person also receives credit for an examination element if he or she presents either a CSCE for that element that was issued within the previous 365 days or an unexpired (or expired but within the grace period for renewal) amateur operator license for a license of a class that required passage of that element.

In its *Petition*, the Anchorage VEC asserted that it was unfair that after the grace period for renewal of an Amateur Radio license ends, a former licensee "loses all credit for any elements passed, and must start all over if they want to continue their Amateur Radio activities. Does the passage of time somehow invalidate a person's knowledge? We think not. We believe that any applicant who can demonstrate that they have passed certain elements at some previous date or who have held a license grant for a particular class of license, again on or before various applicable dates, should not have to be re-

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Vaca Valley Radio Club has proudly served the Northern Solano County Area since 1988. We pride ourselves in providing a friendly place for radio amateurs to meet and improve their operating skills.

We participate in public service events throughout the year and are always ready to assist with communications during times of emergency.

Browse our website for more information about our club. If you have any questions please email us at w6vvr@w6vvr.net or call 707-448-5665 for assistance.

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988 General Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM 420 Vine Street Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at: vacavalleyradio.net

Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3
The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 8pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.2ØØ(-)
WV6F 44Ø.Ø25(+)
WV6F 44Ø.Ø25 – PL 127.3Hz

examined on those elements before a new license can be granted. It seems unfair to allow some applicants to claim element credit for items previously passed and not others."

The FCC stated in the *NPRM* that it recognized that the rules treat a former licensee differently than a licensee who passed the same examination(s) but who continuously renewed his or her license: "We also agree with Anchorage VEC that the fact that an individual allowed his or her license to expire more than two years ago does not necessarily mean that the person no longer possess [*sic*] adequate knowledge of the subject. That a license was continuously renewed does not establish that the licensee remained active in the Amateur Service, for amateur licensees are not required to operate their stations in order to remain licensed."

In 1997, the FCC addressed a similar proposal. At that time, commenters generally opposed allowing examination credit for expired licenses, and the FCC declined to take action. "The Commission noted [in 1997] the opposition to the proposal to allow examination credit for expired licenses, and concluded that requiring licensees to either renew their licenses or retest before they may reenter the Amateur Service does not impose a hardship," it stated in the *NPRM*. "While we continue to believe that requiring licensees to either file a timely renewal application or retake the necessary examination before they can be relicensed does not impose an unreasonable burden, we are skeptical that it is actually necessary to require former licensees to retest."

With this in mind, the FCC is proposing to revise **Section 97.505** to require that VEs give examination credit to an applicant who can demonstrate that he or she formerly held a particular class of license: "We believe [amending Section 97.505] will encourage former amateur operators to become involved again in the technical self-training and public service communications opportunities provided by the Amateur Service. It also could reduce costs (in time as well as money) incurred by former licensees seeking to reenter the Amateur Service. We ask commenters to address these costs and benefits."

With one narrow exception -- expired Technician Class operator licenses granted before March 21, 1987 -- element credit is *not* given for an Amateur Operator license that has expired *and* is beyond the grace period for renewal. The grace period for renewal of an Amateur Operator license is two years, which is also the period of time after which the call sign associated with an expired Amateur Operator license becomes available for reassignment through the vanity call sign system. "We seek comment on whether we should retain this rule," the FCC stated. "While we are not reconsidering the Commission's conclusion that those former licensees should receive credit for the written examination required for a General Class license, we question whether the rule still has any practical effect. That is, are there any remaining holders of expired pre-1987 Technician Class licenses who intend to seek General or Amateur Extra Class licenses, or can we streamline the rule by deleting this provision as obsolete? Similarly, we seek comment on whether Section 97.505, as proposed to be amended in this proceeding, should make provision for expired Conditional Class licenses, which were phased out by renewing them as General Class licenses beginning in 1976."

The FCC is also seeking to eliminate the element credit distinction between a person who passed an examination and kept his or her license current, and a person who passed the same examination but let his or her license expire. "Arguably, we should also eliminate the element credit distinction between a person who passed an examination and applied for a license within a year and a person who passed the same examination but did not apply for a license in that time, on the grounds that the passage of a year does not substantial [*sic*] affect the latter examinee's knowledge," the FCC maintained. "We note, however, that a CSCE also provides temporary authority for an upgrading licensee to exercise the rights and privileges of the higher operator class until disposition of the upgrade application or 365 days, whichever comes first. We are concerned that it may be anomalous or confusing to create a difference between the period during which a CSCE provides temporary operating authority and the period during which a CSCE provides element credit."

Reduction of Two Year Grace Period

Section 97.21(b) provides that a person whose amateur station license grant has expired may still apply for renewal of the license during a two year grace period. According to the FCC, this allows individuals who forget to renew, or experience unforeseen difficulties in renewing their license, a period of time during which they may renew. The FCC noted that a principal reason for providing this grace period "is to allow amateur licensees to restore their operating privileges without sitting for reexamination."

Given that the FCC is proposing to amend the rules to give former licensees examination credit for the element or elements they passed to obtain their expired licenses, it stated that that a two year grace period may no longer be necessary and proposed to reduce the grace period for renewal to six months (180 days), "which we believe is a sufficient period of time for individuals who forget to renew or experience unforeseen difficulties when renewing their licenses. Licensees who do not renew during the grace period would be able to obtain a new license under the rule changes proposed above and could then request their former call sign through the vanity call sign system if the call sign had not already been assigned to another licensee under the vanity call sign system."

The FCC also wondered whether instead of amending the rules to allow element credit for expired licenses, it "should simply extend the renewal grace period for a substantial length of time (such as a 10 year grace period). Extending the grace period would provide former licensees with the same relief -- permitting them to reenter the Amateur Service without retesting -- with fewer administrative burdens on former licensees, VEs and VECs; however, extending the grace period could affect the vanity call sign system (see below)."

Reduction in Waiting Period for Vanity Call Signs

When the vanity call sign system was implemented, the FCC concluded that call signs should not be available for reassignment for two years following the death of a licensee, or expiration or termination of the license for that call sign; close rela-

tives of a deceased licensee are exempt from this rule, following the licensee's death. The FCC stated in the *NPRM* that it set the waiting period at two years "in part because it corresponds with the renewal grace period. Because we propose above to shorten the grace period to six months, we also propose to reduce the time before a call sign becomes available for reassignment to six months."

The FCC also noted that correspondence with the grace period was not the only reason identified by the Commission for a two year waiting period: "Other reasons were 'to avoid confusion in over-the-air station identification, to maintain accuracy in the licensee data base, and to accommodate QSL bureaus' and to 'preclude trafficking in licenses,' where a licensee, in exchange for some type of consideration, vacates a desirable call sign so that another licensee could immediately apply for it before its assignability becomes known generally." In addition, the FCC pointed out that the two year waiting period "provides ample time for a close relative of a deceased licensee to obtain the same class of license as the deceased held, in order to be eligible to hold the deceased's former call sign. While the vanity waiting period should not be shorter than the renewal grace period due to the possibility of conflicting license grants, there is no practical reason why the waiting period could not be longer than the grace period."

Administration of Amateur Radio License Exams

Currently, there must be three VEs at an exam session and they must observe the examinee(s) throughout the entire examination. The VEs are responsible for the proper conduct and necessary supervision of each examination. The VEs must grade the examinee's answers immediately upon completion of each examination. When the administering VEs determine that the examinee has passed the examination elements required for the operator license sought, they must certify that the examinee is qualified for the license grant and that they complied with the administering VE requirements.

"Questions regarding whether three VEs are necessary to administer an examination sometimes come before the Commission in the context of claims that three VEs are not available at a particular location or time that an examinee would like to take an examination, or that an examinee must travel a great distance to a location where three VEs are available," the FCC stated in the *NPRM*. "This requirement can also cause VEs to incur travel expenses that amateur examinees may have to reimburse. We note that unavailability of examination opportunities compromises one of the bases and purposes of the Amateur Service rules: To expand the existing number of trained operators, technicians and electronics experts."

Editor's note—the remainder of this article can be obtained on line at http://www.arrl.net

Editor's note—Amateur radio items for sale can be listed in this newsletter. If you have anything amateur radio related, email KD6WKY@arrl.net for a listing.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely

Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
Street: _____
City: _____Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)
License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)
E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues --------- $20.00_____
Each Family Member -- $ 2.00_____
Student ---------- $ 5.00_____
Repeater/Autopatch donation ---_____
Call/Name badge -------- $11.00_____
Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues---------- $37.00_____
Senior is 65 yr or older with one time proof on age.

Total----------_____
Paid by CASH: ____ Check #_____
DATE:_____

Mail to : Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143